

Sep 21, 2021

# Rapid Recovery Plan Ashburnham Phase III

OverUnder



**Introduction**

**Key Findings**

**Project Recommendations**

**Questions & Answers**



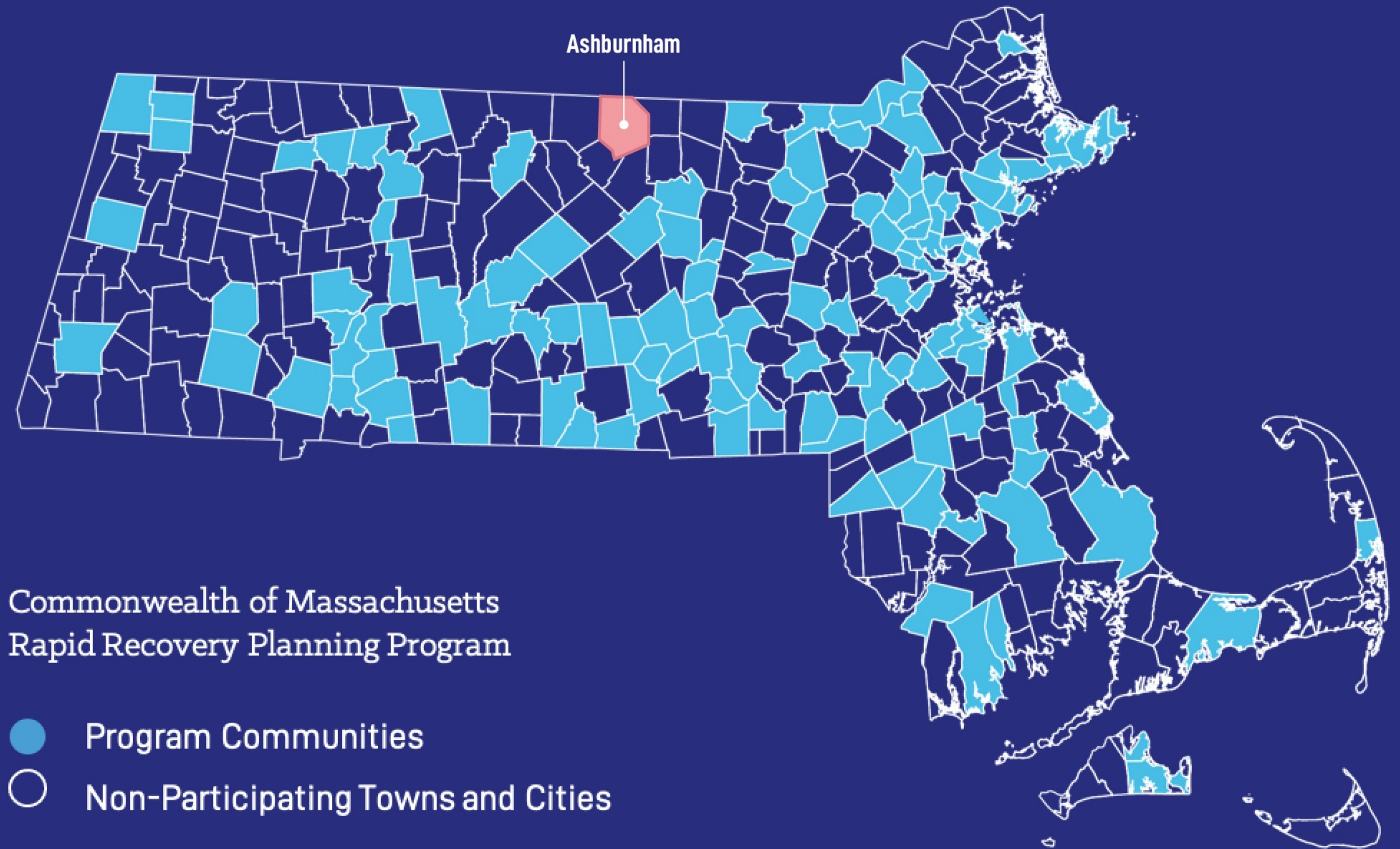
→ **Introduction**

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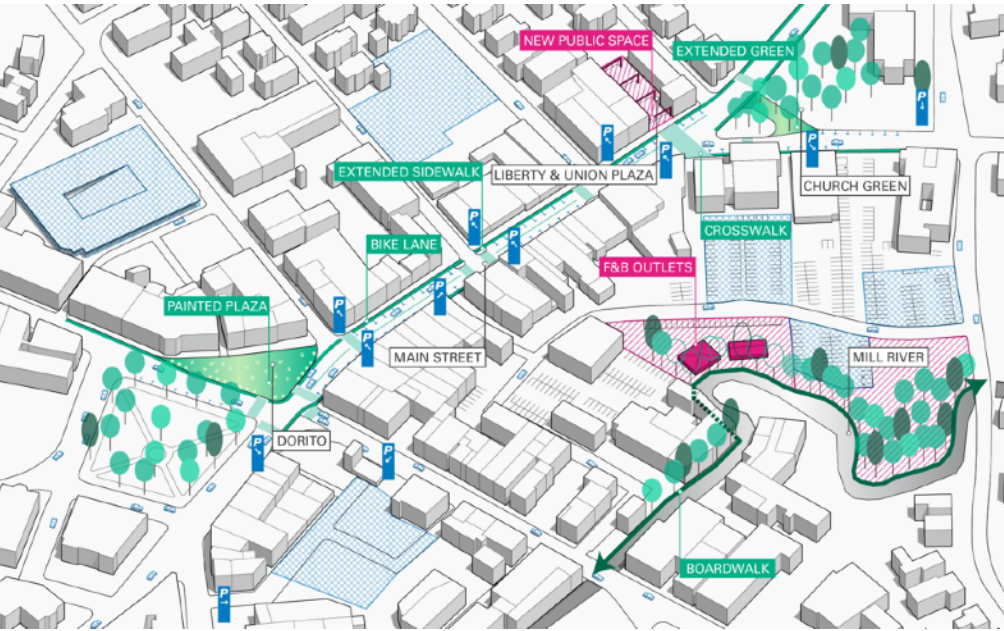
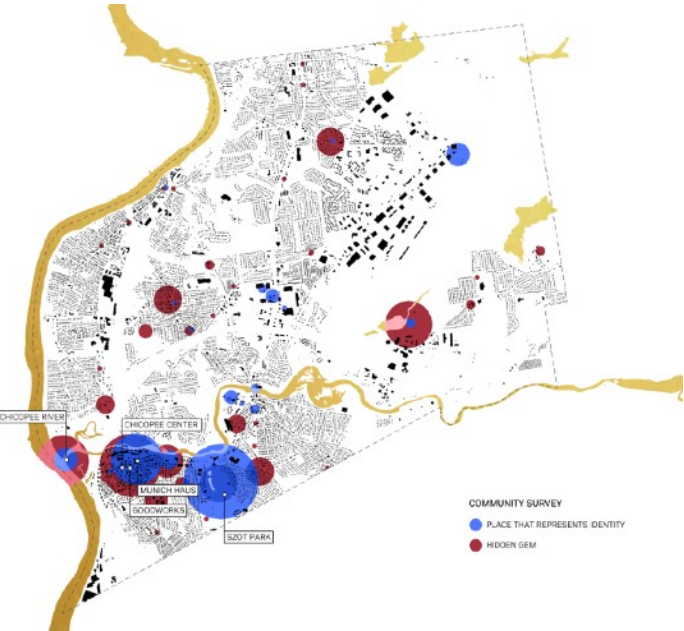
Questions & Answers







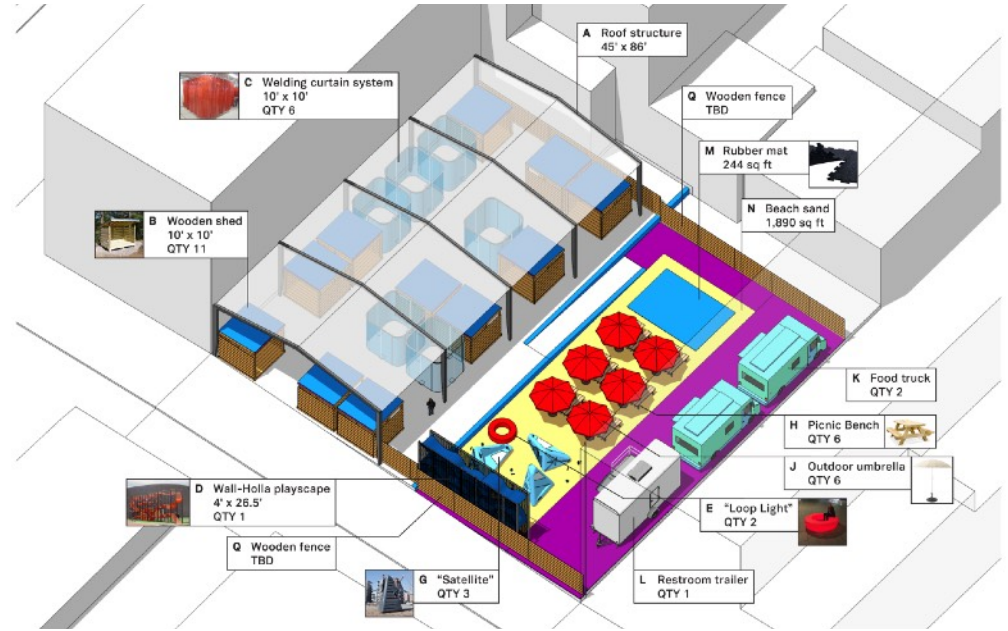
# Who we are



Downtown Taunton Plan



Chicopee Center Visioning



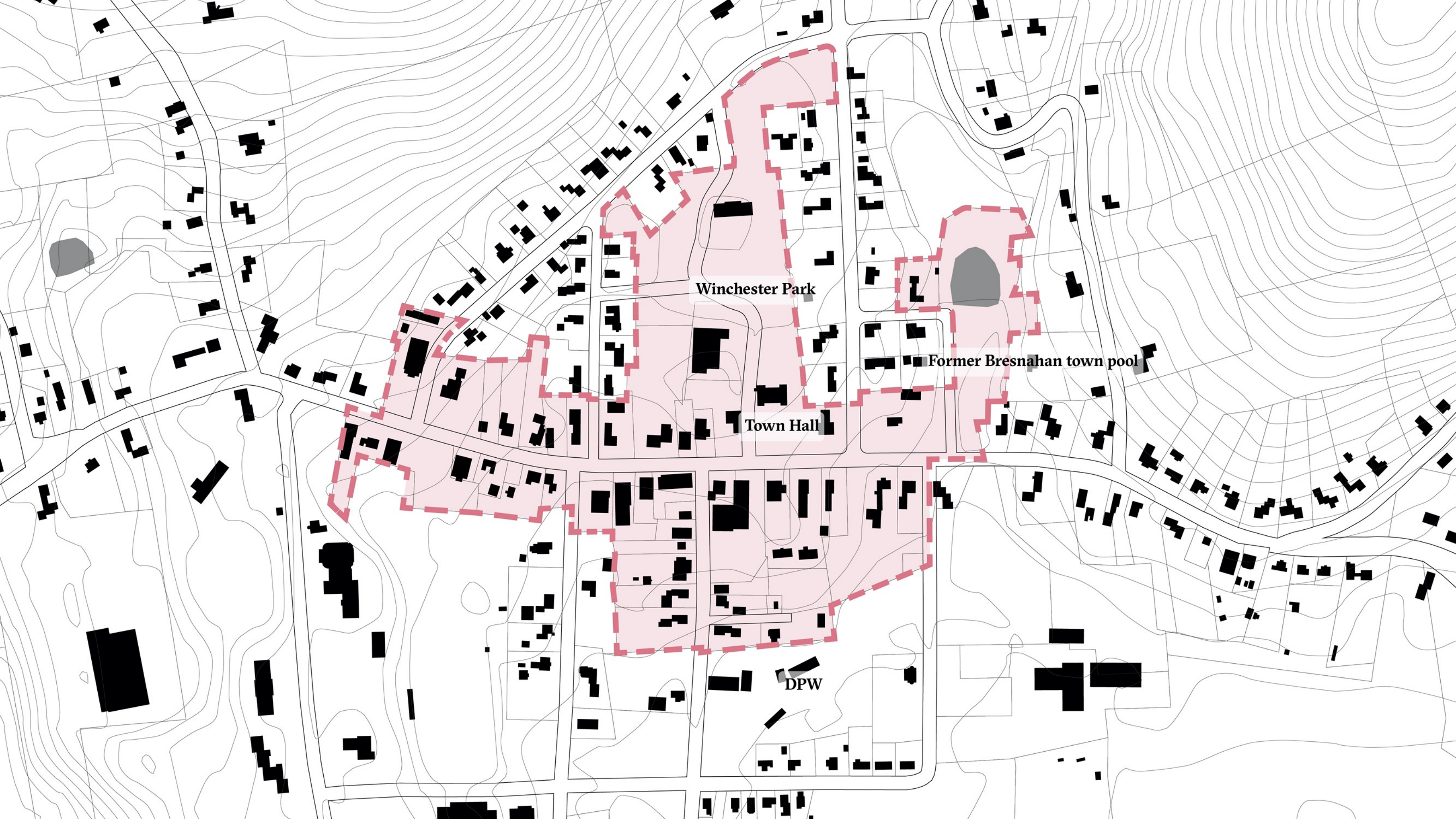
New Bedford Keystone Parcel



# Schedule

<b>Phase 1: Diagnostic</b>	7 weeks (Week of April 12 through week of May 31)	Kick off meeting, Community Agreement, define study area, Public Presentation; promote state-wide business owner survey, Baseline Data
<b>Phase 2: Project Recommendations</b>	7 weeks (Week of June 7 through week of July 26)	Coordination with community, SME(s) if applicable, Public Presentation; Project List
<b>Phase 3: Plans</b>	8 weeks (Week of August 2 through week of October 4)	Coordination with community and SME(s), Final Plan Draft and 1 revision





Winchester Park

Former Bresnahan town pool

Town Hall

DPW



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# Communication

- Economic Development Commission
- Town Select Board
- Town Administrator

# Business Community

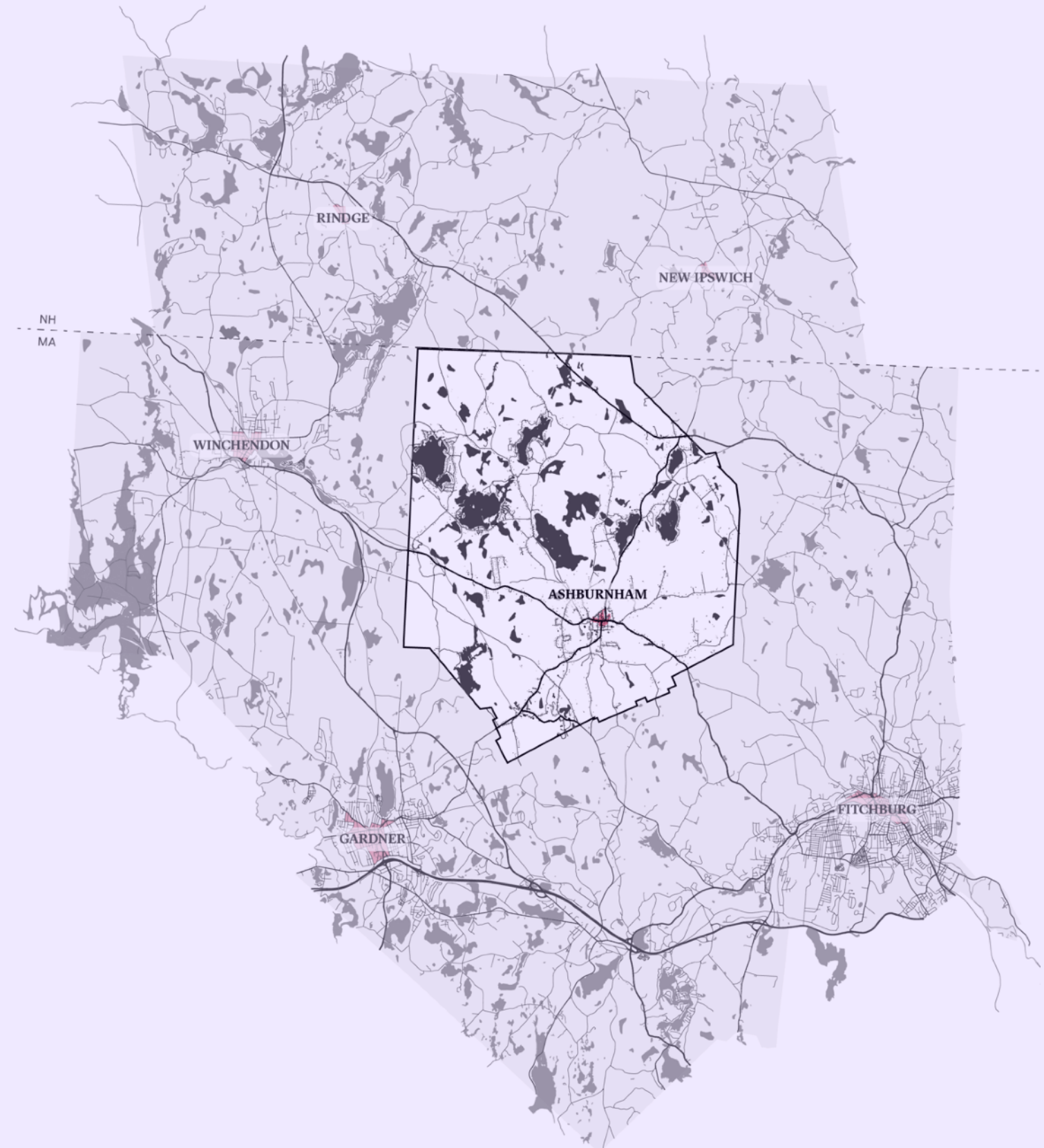
- online surveys

# Physical Observation

- photo documentation
- sketches

# Research

- GIS
- data collection





# The Village Center has many assets, including:

- A beautiful building stock
- Proximity to natural attractions
- Institutions like Cushing Academy & the Piano Museum
- Niche businesses



# Some of the challenges facing the Village Center are:

- Convenient public parking
- Pedestrian safety
- Lack of a programmatic anchor
- Impediments to business growth



*How do we take  
maintenance into  
account?*

*The town needs to  
support its businesses*

*We need to  
attract  
customers*

## **What we heard from you**

*How will you  
address  
parking?*

*There's a lack of  
transparency and  
accountability*

*Make sure precedents  
are the right scale for  
Ashburnham*



Introduction

Key Findings

→ **Project Recommendations**

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- #1 Provide Support to Businesses in Need**
- #2 Enhance Village Center Identity**
- #3 Improve Pedestrian Safety**
- #4 Bring Key New Business to Village Center**
- #5 Attract Visitors to the Village Center**
- #6 Attract New Investment**



## #1 Provide Support to Businesses in Need

- A. Use Recovery Funds to bolster Town Hall capacity
- B. Assist in acquiring funds for cash-strapped businesses
- C. Create a Storefront Improvement Program to improve existing businesses

## #2 Enhance Village Center Identity

- A. Create a Village Center brand

## #3 Improve Pedestrian Safety

- A. Conduct mobility research & design and implement temporary traffic calming strategies
- B. Modify traffic speeds
- C. Implement permanent mobility strategies

## #4 Bring Key New Business to Center

- A. Develop a Tenant Recruitment & Retention Plan

## #5 Attract Visitors to the Village Center

- A. Streamline permitting for outdoor activation
- B. Create and market unique and vibrant events
- C. Rethink the design & programming of Winchester Park
- D. Create a new park at the former town pool area
- E. Create connections to surrounding natural resources and trails
- F. Create incentivization program to shop locally

## #6 Attract New Investment

- A. Attract investment for the redevelopment of the DPW lot



## #1 Provide Support to Businesses in Need

- A. Use Recovery Funds to bolster Town Hall capacity\*
- B. Assist in acquiring funds for cash-strapped businesses\*
- C. Create a Storefront Improvement Program to improve existing businesses\*

## #2 Enhance Village Center Identity

- A. Create a Village Center brand

## #3 Improve Pedestrian Safety

- A. Conduct mobility research & design and implement temporary traffic calming strategies\*
- B. Modify traffic speeds
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## #4 Bring Key New Business to Center

- A. Develop a Tenant Recruitment & Retention Plan\*

## #5 Attract Visitors to the Village Center

- A. Streamline permitting for outdoor activation\*
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## #6 Attract New Investment

- A. Attract investment for the redevelopment of the DPW lot\*

\* RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WERE UPDATED BASED ON FEEDBACK



**#1**

**Provide Support to  
Businesses in Need**



# #1A Use Recovery Funds to bolster town recovery

How?

- Use recovery funds and available grants to administer business assistance funds and address reporting requirements



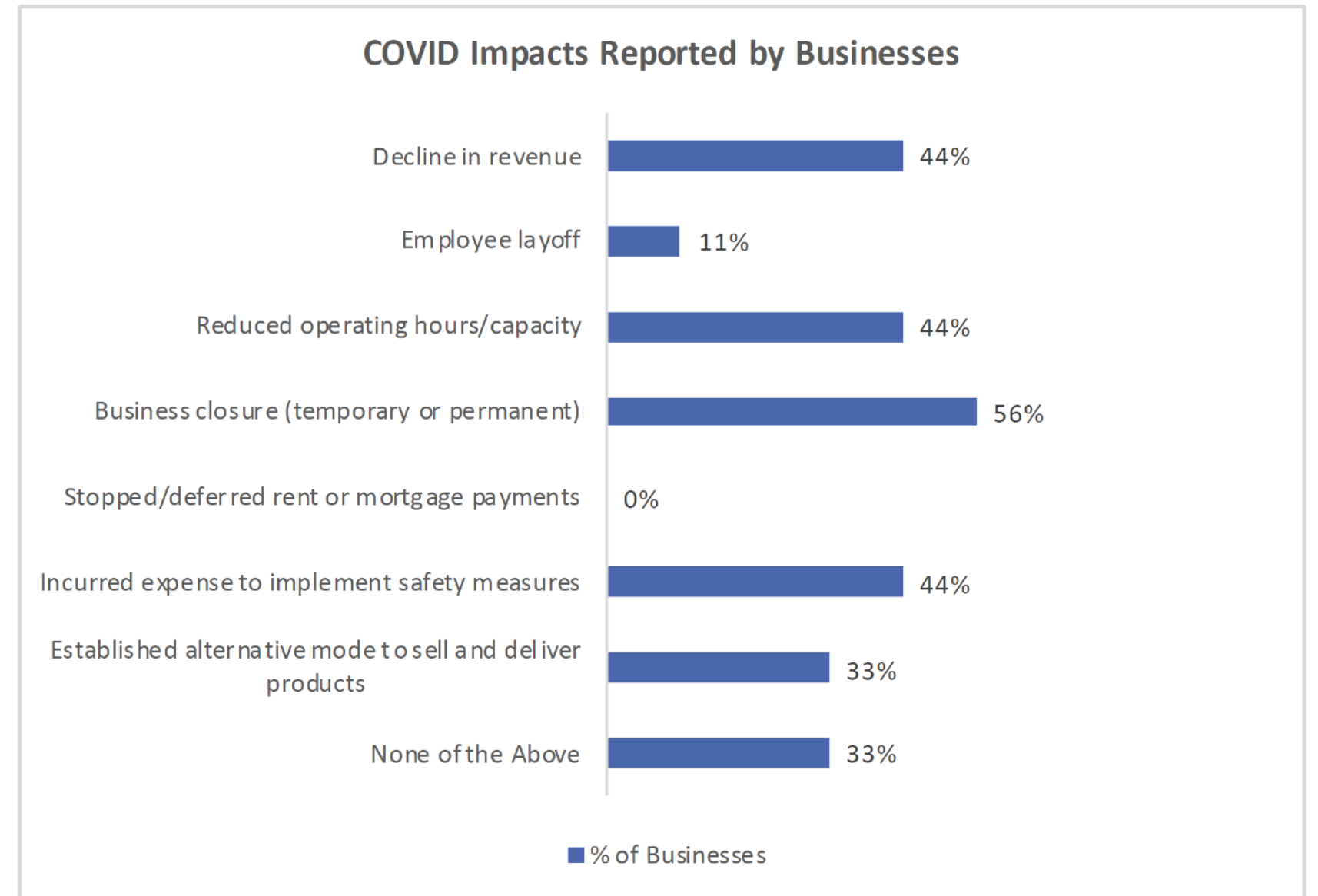
Welcome Sign in front of Ashburnham Town Hall



# #1B Assist in acquiring funds for cash-strapped businesses

Why?

- 4 out of the 9 businesses that participated in the survey experienced a decline in revenue due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Two-thirds of the businesses surveyed reported being impacted by COVID in some way.



Results of the business survey conducted in the Village Center in March & April of 2021



# #1B Assist in acquiring funds for cash-strapped businesses

How?

- Business engagement to identify needs
- Identify funding sources that best correspond to business needs
- Administer a capital and/or technical assistance grant program



Mix of businesses in the Village Center



# #1C Create a Storefront Improvement Program to improve existing businesses

Why?

- A number of Village Center business storefronts have inadequate signage, poorly organized interior layouts or outdoor spaces that cater to cars rather than pedestrians.





# #1C Create a Storefront Improvement Program to improve existing businesses

How?

- Identify grants, loans or a hybrid program
- Engage business and property owners to get buy-in
- Develop storefront design guidelines
- Create online application platform



## APPLICATION FOR SIGN & FAÇADE PROGRAM

### Purpose:

The Sign & Facade Program was established to provide technical and financial assistance to Ashland businesses making external improvements to their establishments. This program matches up to half of the project's cost or \$5,000 (whichever is less) for facade and/or sign improvements with town funding through the Ashland Economic Development Incentive Program. In doing so, the Town seeks to promote local merchants and enhance the physical appearance of Ashland.

### Eligibility Requirements:

This program is open to all businesses in Ashland but targeted to properties located on visible or high-traffic areas such as Main Street, Pleasant Street, Route 135, Pond Street. The applicant must either own the property in question or have a letter of authorization for the project from the owner. Moreover, the property must not have any outstanding obligations to the Town (i.e. no back taxes owed, town liens, etc.).

The project must have all required town approvals and permits. There is no permit required for basic landscape improvements but please consult the building department if any structures, paving or signs that are being modified.

Examples of exterior improvements that are eligible under this program include:

- Accessibility improvements (i.e. handicapped accessible ramps)
- Exterior signs
- Awnings
- Lighting energy conservation for windows & doors
- Painting
- Surface Parking lots
- Planters and landscaping
- Correction of Code
- Program funds may not be used for improvements to the interior of the business or to sidewalks or public walkways.





CONCEPT SKETCH  
10-14 WYMAN ST.  
STOUGHTON, MA  
©Antri. 2018

# #2

## Enhance Village Center Identity



# #2A Create a Village Center brand

Why?

- Village Center is **visually undefined**
- Businesses have **no unifying element**
- Previous branding efforts have been piecemeal and not comprehensive
- Difficult to direct visitors to the area



Existing banners highlighting businesses on Main Street



## #2A Create a Village Center brand

How?

- Engage key Village Center **businesses and stakeholders** to define which characteristics they want to project
- **Propose 1 to 3 varied options** at a community engagement workshop to build consensus
- **Test** the chosen option by deploying its use in various media: signage, posters, town website, social media, etc.
- Garner **additional feedback** from the community
- Revise and **implement** widely



Town of Nanton branding



PRIMARY COLOUR

NANTON RUSTIC RED

Pantone: 1815

CMYK: 0 73 75 51

RGB: 124 33 30

Websafe Hex value: #7C211E

ACCENT COLOURS

LEATHER BROWN

Pantone: 464

CMYK: 0 28 70 47

RGB: 135 96 40

Websafe Hex value: #876028

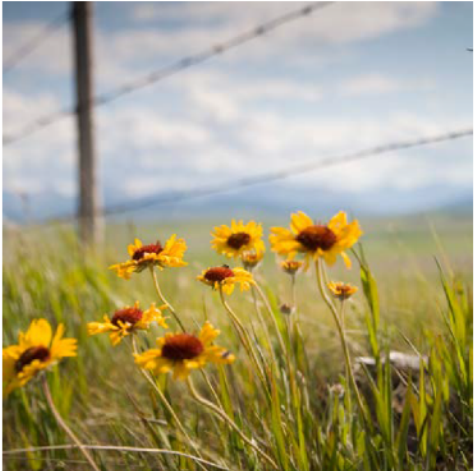
BURLAP BEIGE

Pantone: 467

CMYK: 0 7 25 13

RGB: 221 204 165

Websafe Hex value: #DDCCA5



# DISPLAYS AND SIGNAGE

In order to maintain the style, tone and personality of the NANTON brand, we must establish a set of rules that will provide the framework for clear and consistent communication to our audience.

Displays and signage and all other marketing materials must all have a consistent look in order to ensure the brand’s integrity.

Here are some examples of signage that align with the NANTON brand.

3'x8' BANNER



TEARDROP BANNERS

# #3

## Improve Pedestrian Safety



# #3A Conduct mobility research & design and implement temporary traffic calming strategies

Why?

→ Traffic volumes, speeding and missing sidewalks make the roads generally unsafe for pedestrians.



Road & sidewalk conditions on Main Street



# #3A Conduct mobility research & design and implement temporary traffic calming strategies

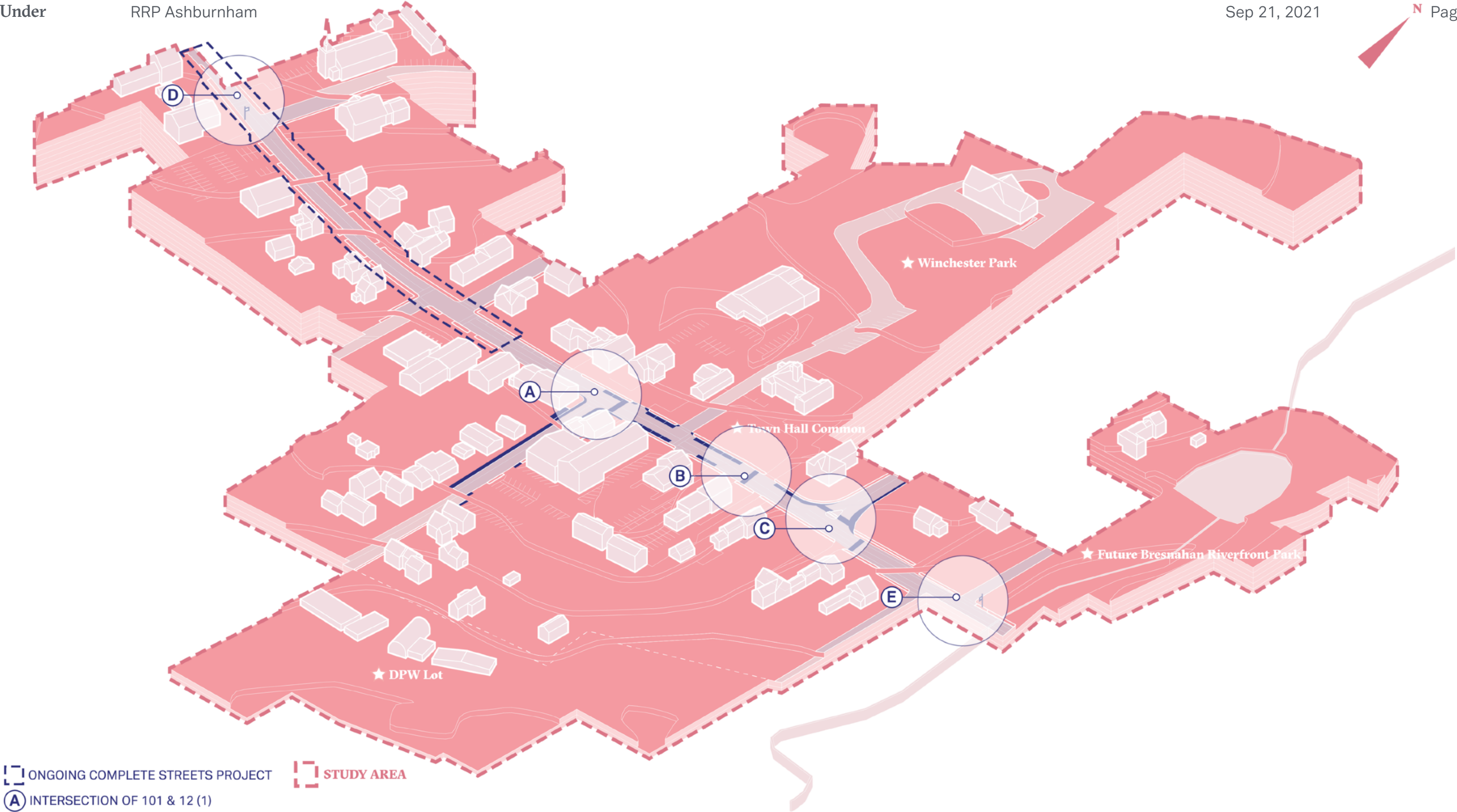
How?

- Initial study, plan and lower-scale implementation
- Identify community goals for how they use and access Main Street
- Particular focus on the design of the Route 101 intersections with Route 12



Example of temporary implementation





- ONGOING COMPLETE STREETS PROJECT
- STUDY AREA
- A

INTERSECTION OF 101 & 12 (1)
- B

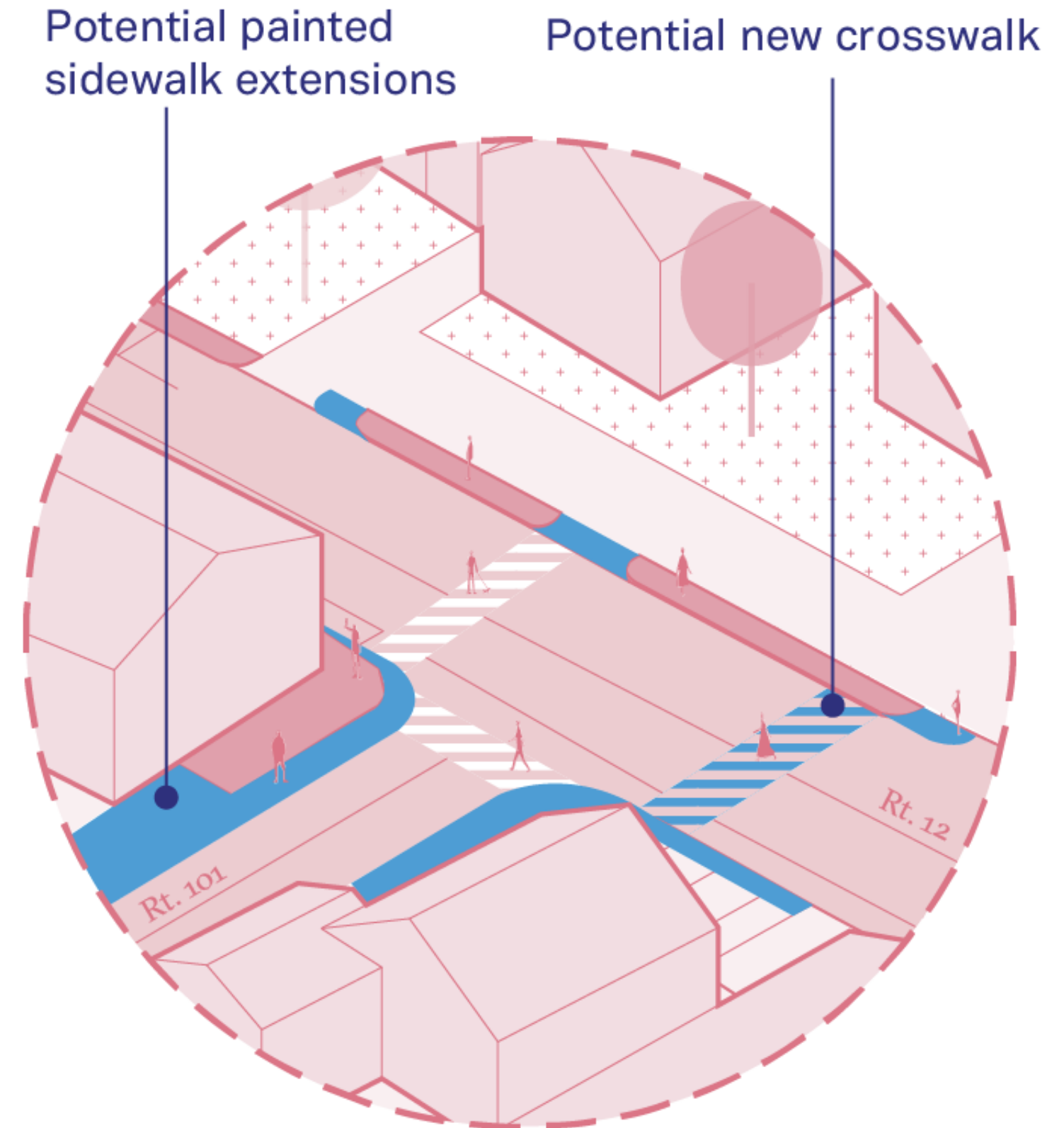
CROSSWALK AT TOWN HALL
- C

INTERSECTION OF 101 & 12 (2)
- D

GATEWAY FROM NORTHWEST
- E

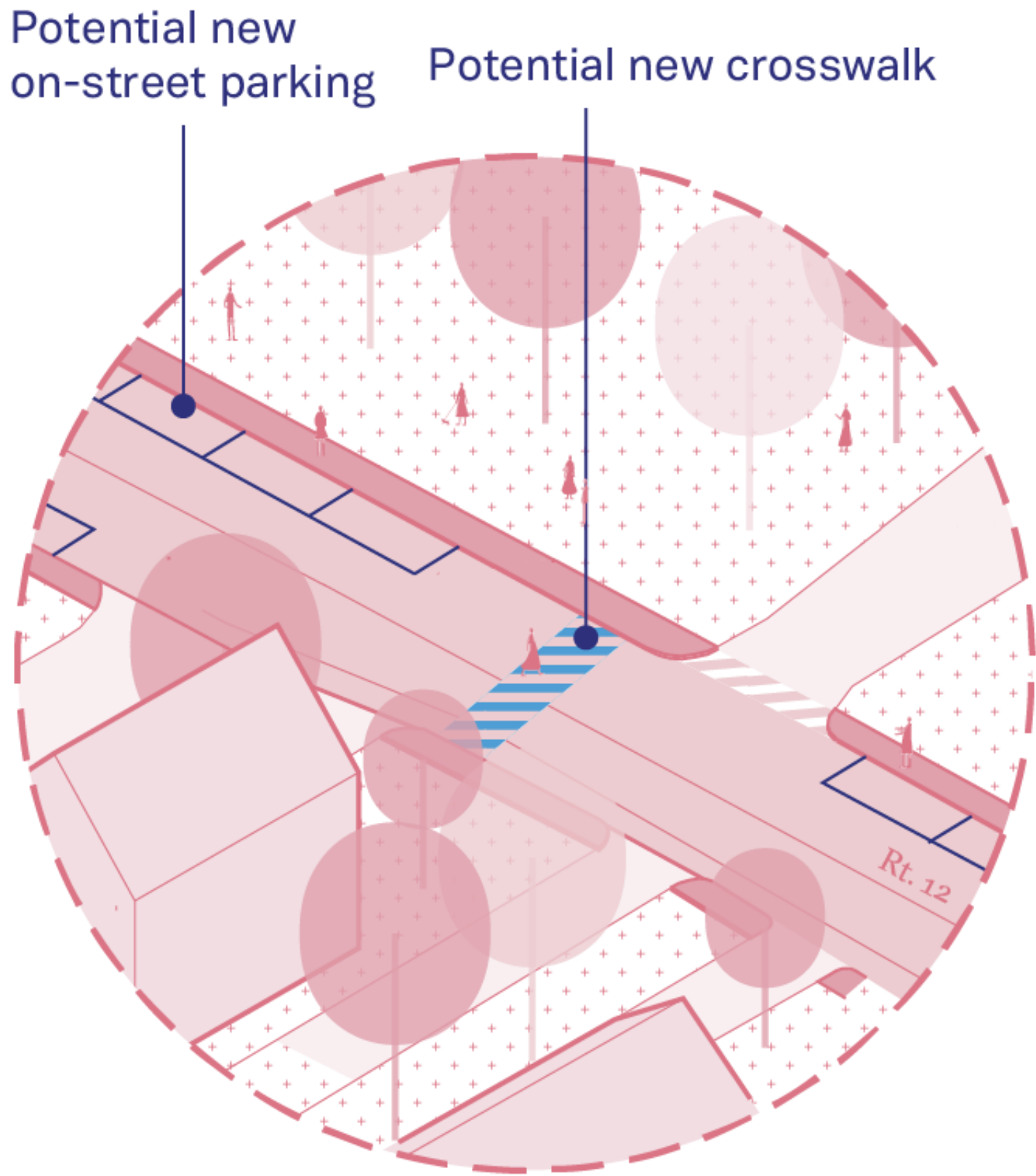
GATEWAY FROM SOUTHEAST

# Intersection of 101 & 12 (1)

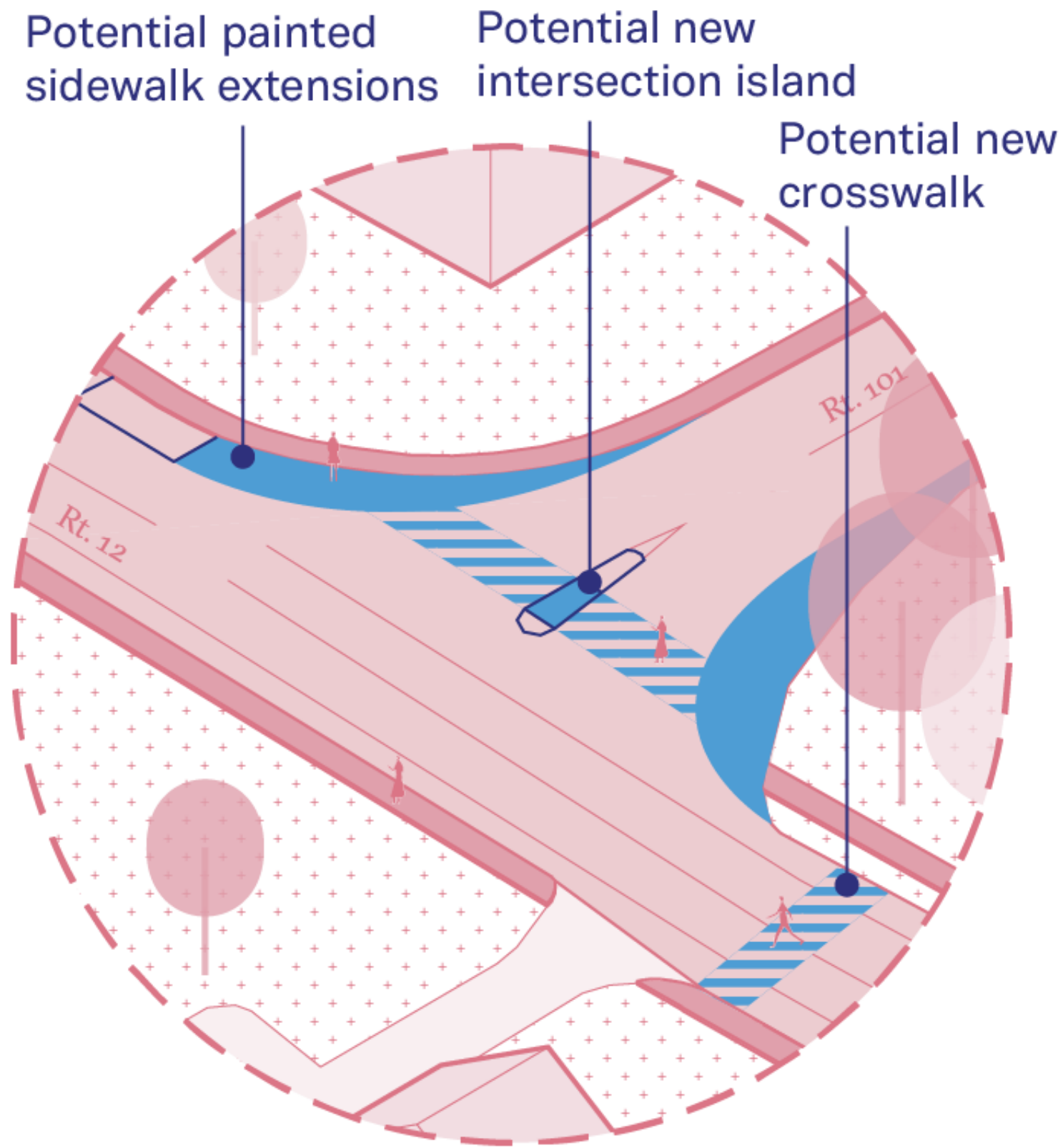




# Crosswalk at Town Hall

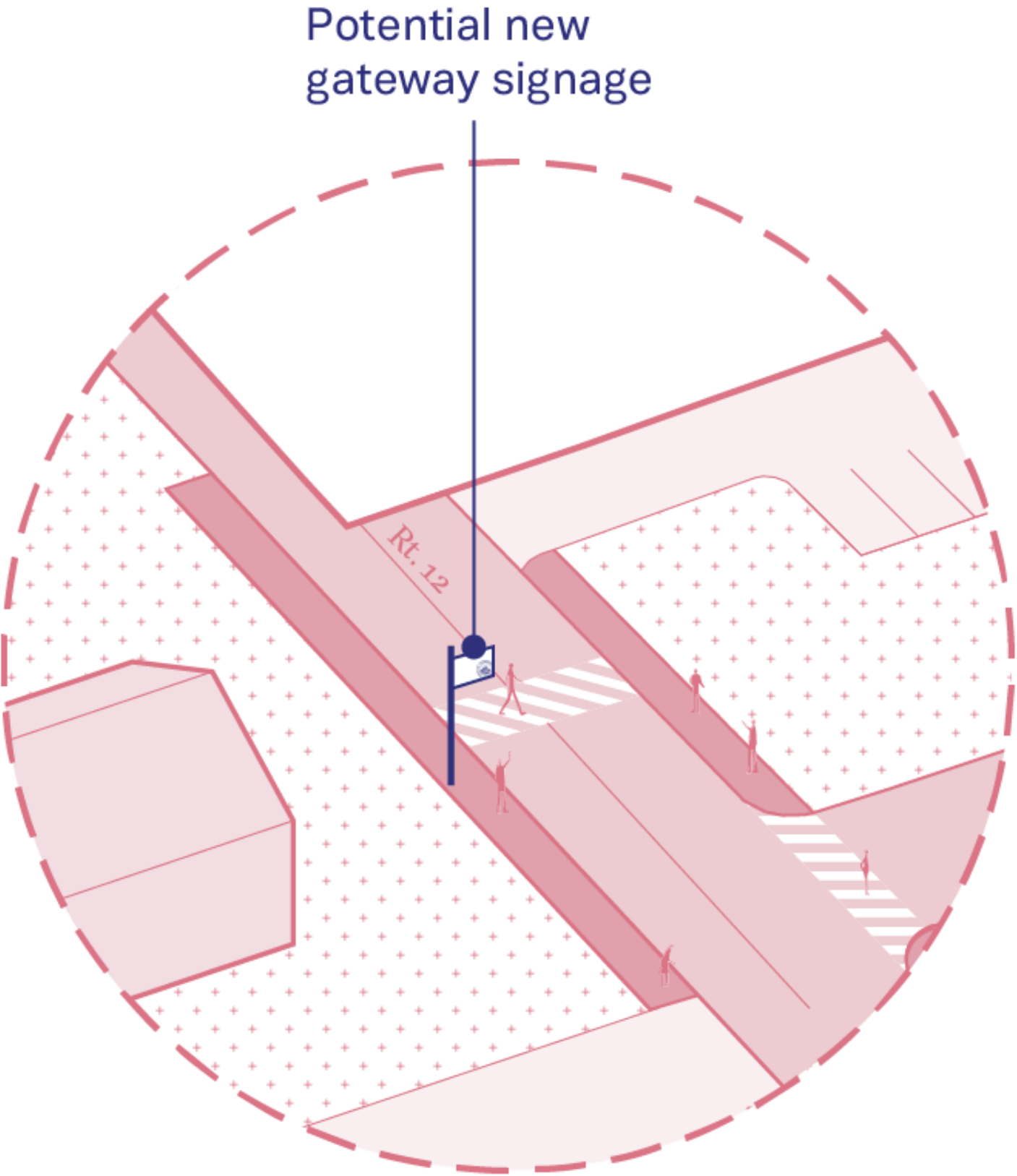


# Intersection of 101 & 12 (2)

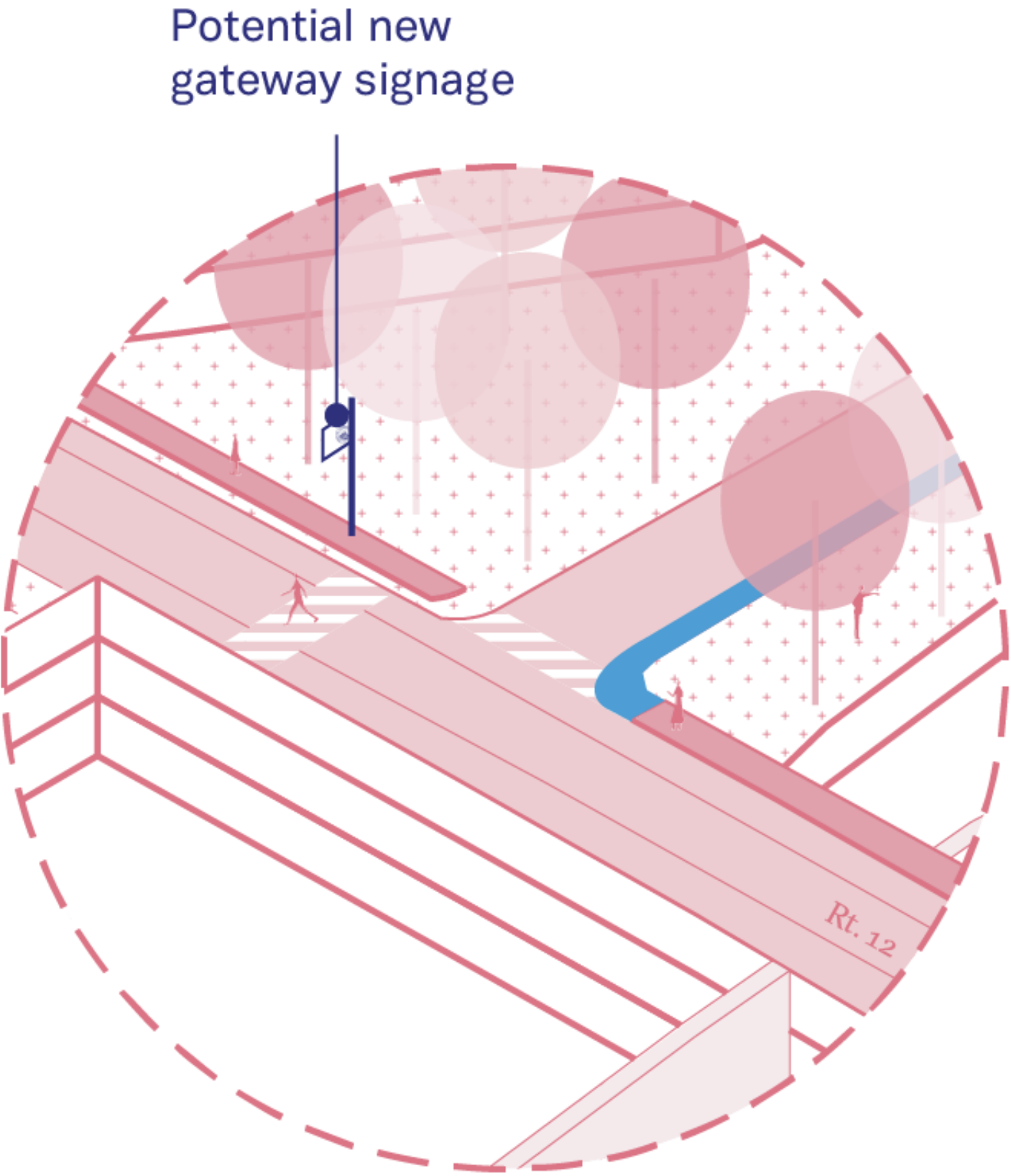




# Gateway from Northwest



# Gateway from Southeast







Historic Downtown Signage



## #3B Modify traffic speeds

Why?

- The pandemic saw diminished traffic flow across the state, but also saw an increase in traffic speeds
- Not enough time for drivers to see what businesses are downtown



Intersection of two State Roads in Ashburnham Village Center

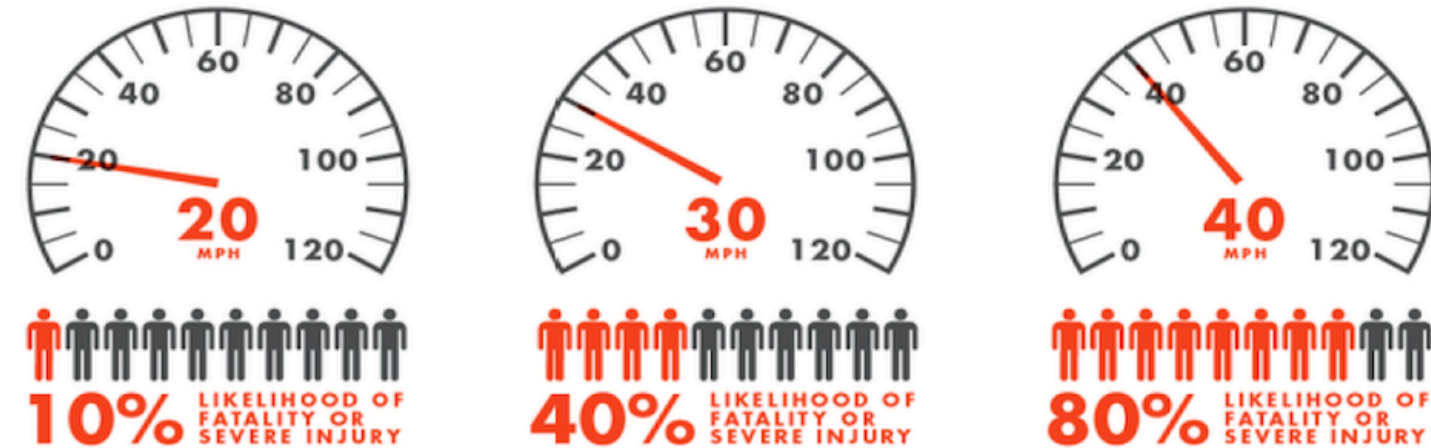


## #3B Modify traffic speeds

How?

- Lower speed limit by implementing a "Slow Zone"
- Enforce speed limit through an awareness campaign
- Allow more time to see what businesses are downtown

### PORTLAND



**DEATH DUE TO SPEED**

Graphic: City of Portland



Examples of speeding awareness campaigns



# #3C Implement permanent mobility strategies

How?

- Access management controls and driveway narrowing
- On-street parking for access and traffic calming
- Installation of missing sidewalks
- Crosswalk curb extensions to improve visibility
- Reconfiguration of the Rt. 101 N & Rt. 12 intersection
- Speed humps, narrowed lanes, raised crosswalks, crossing islands, bike lanes, gateway signage, etc.



Road & sidewalk conditions on Main Street



**#4**

**Bring Key New Business  
to Village Center**



# #4A Develop Tenant Recruitment & Retention Plan

Why?

- The pandemic has hurt existing businesses in the Village Center & has discouraged new businesses from starting for fear of failure
- Complex and strict zoning regulations and permitting processes are long-standing hurdles for potential new businesses



Existing mix of businesses in the Village Center



# #4A Develop Tenant Recruitment & Retention Plan

How?

- Identify kinds of businesses wanted through stakeholder outreach
- Conduct market study
- Review zoning, permitting & licensing processes to identify and lift any barriers
- Design a tenant recruitment and retention program that works with aspirations & market realities



## Ashburnham

### Business Development Guide



**#5**

**Attract Visitors to the  
Village Center**

# #5A Streamline permitting for outdoor activation

Why?

- The Village Center lacks activity in public & private outdoor spaces



Outdoor Dining in Peterborough, NH



# #5A Streamline permitting for outdoor activation

How?

- Identify **location and characteristics of all accessible public and private outdoor spaces**
- Engage with **businesses** that have activated or are interested in **activating their outdoor spaces**
- Engage with **organizations or individuals** that have in the past held **public events** or showed interest in holding public events in the Village Center
- Review and streamline processes for outdoor dining & outdoor event permits



Engagement process for Strategy Guide for Activating Public Spaces in Worcester, MA

## #5B Create and market unique and vibrant events

Why?

- The Village Center lacks activity
- Existing events like the Farmers Market are successful but outside of the Village Center
- There are not many outdoor events in the Village Center

The image shows a marketing brochure for the Ashburnham Farmers Market. On the left is a photograph of various fresh vegetables, including orange and red bell peppers, green bell peppers, and cherry tomatoes, with small price tags. On the right is a photograph of a large yellow sunflower and other colorful flowers. The text on the brochure includes the market name, the event schedule, and the location.

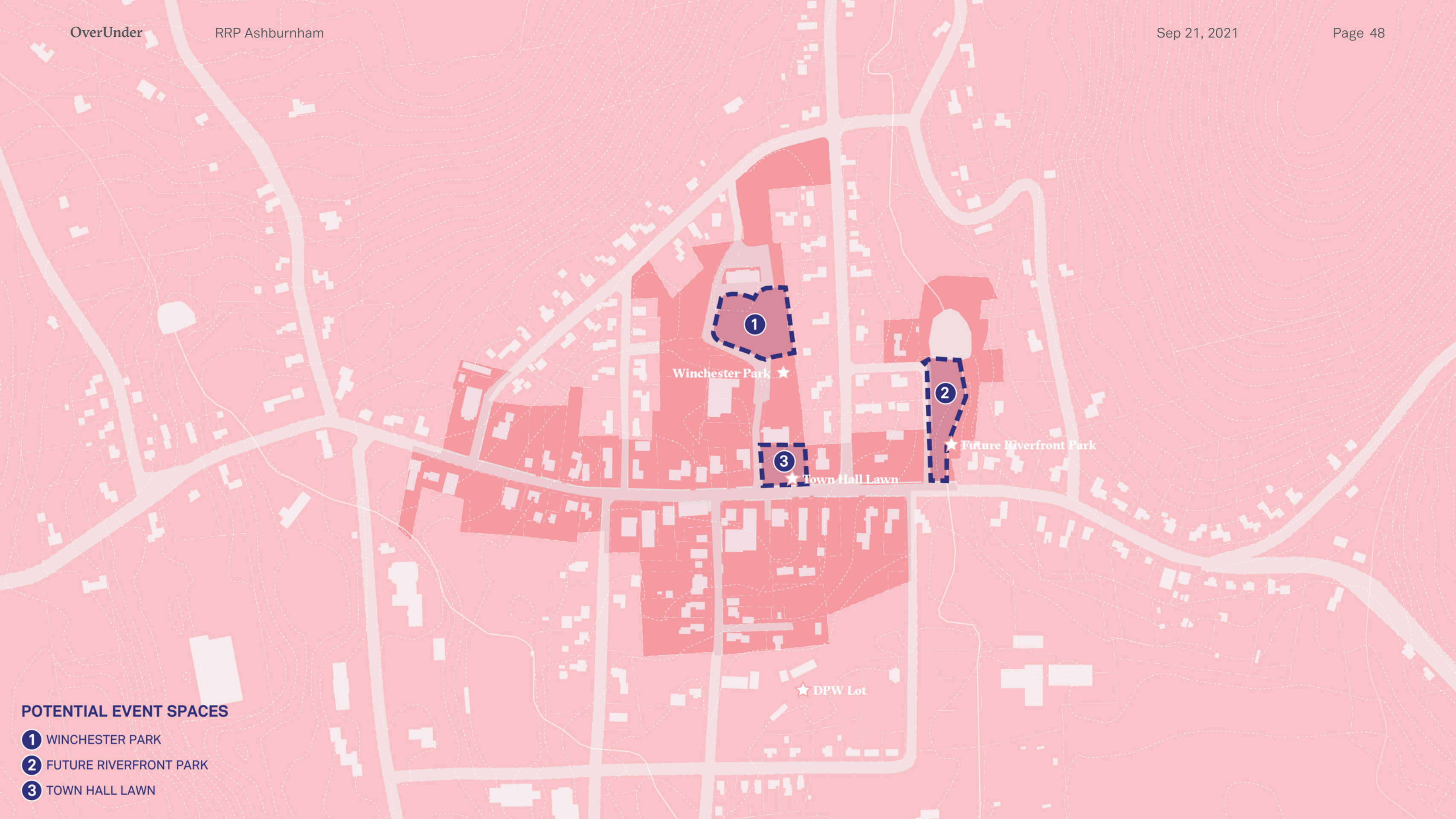
**Ashburnham  
Farmers  
Market**

*Last Saturday of the Month  
10am - 1pm / May - October*

Local Farm Based Products.  
Meetinghouse Hill (top of Cushing St.)  
5/29 6/26 7/31 8/28 9/25 10/30

Ashburnham Farmers' market marketing brochure.





POTENTIAL EVENT SPACES

- 1 WINCHESTER PARK
- 2 FUTURE RIVERFRONT PARK
- 3 TOWN HALL LAWN



# #5B Create and market unique and vibrant events

How?

- Identify **potential locations**
- Identify **partners** interested in hosting events in the Village Center
- Possible events could include **piano concerts** piped in to the Winchester Park lawn, **performance events**, **craft markets**, and **pop-up sheds**
- **Advertise events beyond** the Village Center: at Cushing Academy, the Ashburnham lakes, and nearby towns



Winterbridge Pop-up Cultural event space in Fall River, MA





"The Corner Spot" Pop-up Event Space in Ashland, MA



# #5B Rethink the design and programming of Winchester Park

How?

→ Parking, and new Library entrance



Winchester Park



# #5C Rethink the design and programming of Winchester Park

How?

- Master plan for the whole site in phases taking advantage of a combination of funding sources
- Consider natural playground
- Outdoor musical instruments, performances
- Public visioning process
- Hire a landscape architect



Fisher Hill Reservoir Park Play Structure in Brookline, MA





Concerts on the Common in Waltham, MA



# #5D Create a new park at the former town pool area

Why?

- Potential for a new public space near the Village Center
- Lot controlled by Water & Sewer Commission



Current condition of former Bresnahan pool area



# #5D Create a new park at the former town pool area

How?

- Start with volunteer "Clean-Up Day"
- Include pop-up sheds, benches



Example of pop-up shops



# #5E Create connections to surrounding natural resources and trails

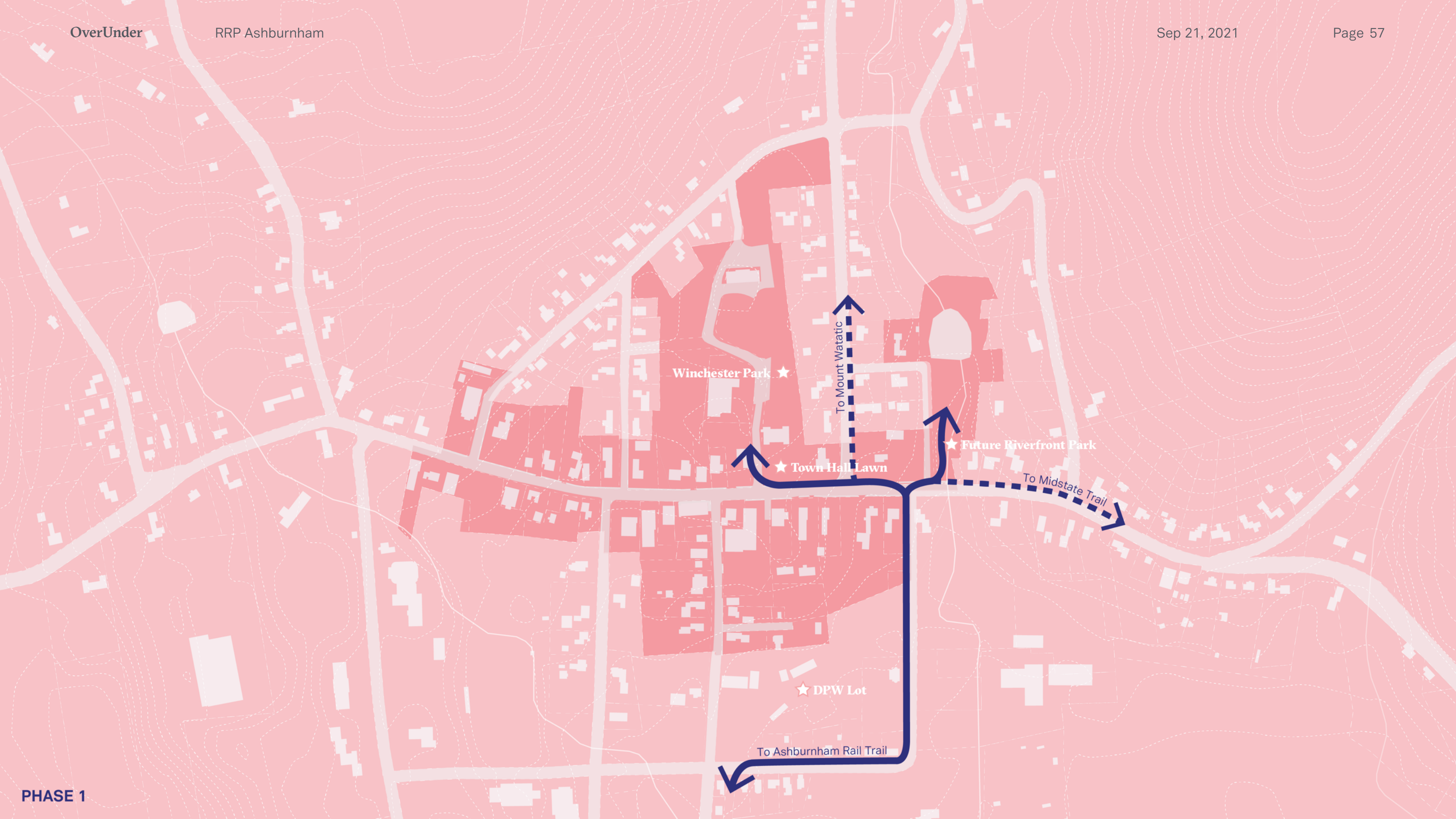
How?

- Signage to Midstate & Mount Watatic
- New path from Main Street to Rail Trail



Ashburnham Rail Trail





Winchester Park ★

★ Town Hall Lawn

★ Future Riverfront Park

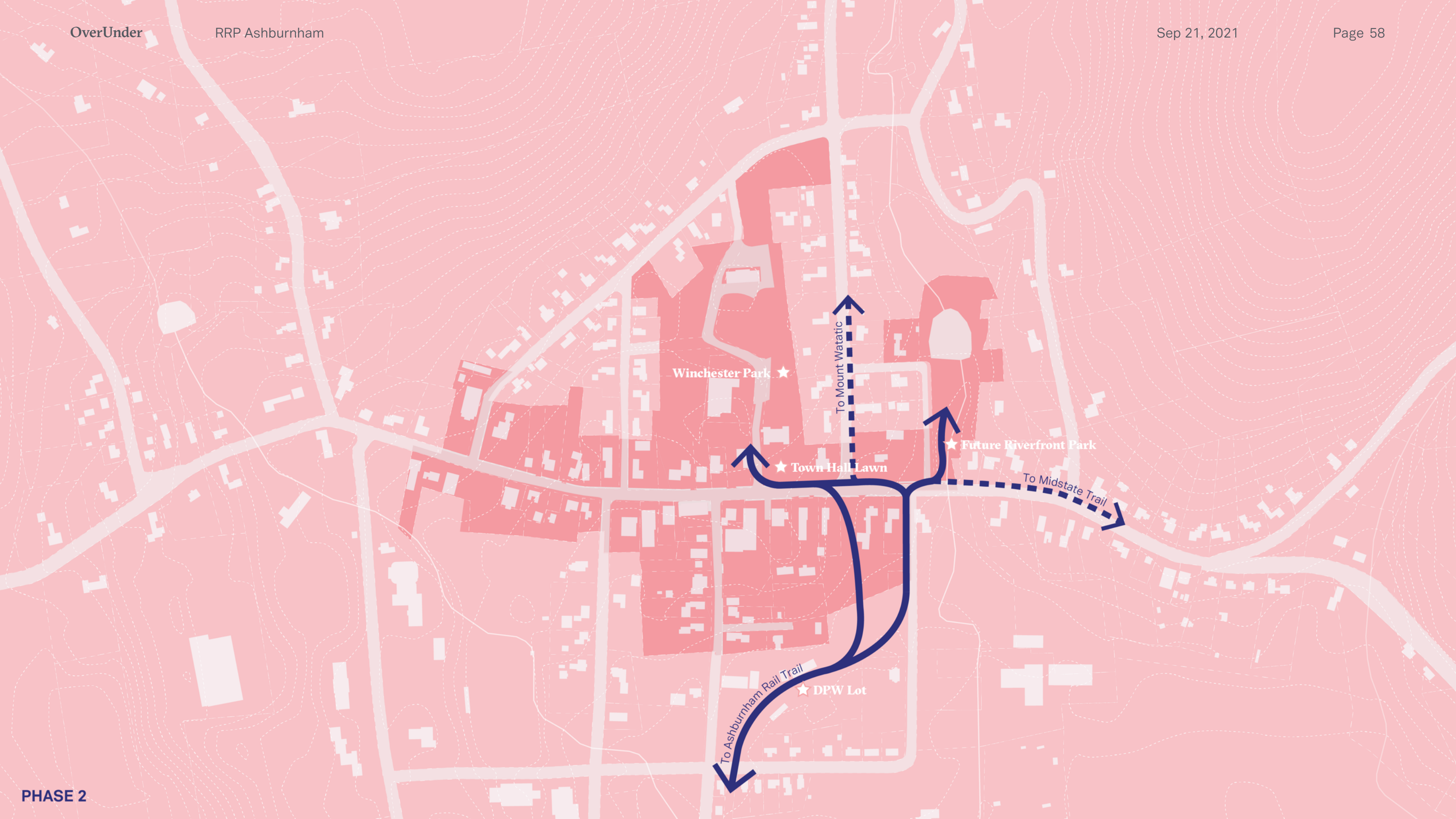
★ DPW Lot

To Mount Watatic

To Midstate Trail

To Ashburnham Rail Trail





Winchester Park ★

★ Town Hall Lawn

★ Future Riverfront Park

★ DPW Lot

To Mount Watatic

To Midstate Trail

To Ashburnham Rail Trail



# #5F Create an incentivization program to shop locally

Why?

- "Leakage" from Ashburnham's consumer market to larger markets based on the willingness of consumers to travel relatively long distances for their needs
- People outside of the Village Center don't have many reasons to shop here



Creative Connections



## #5F Create an incentivization program to shop locally

How?

- Create centralized discount program that applies to all businesses
- Allow each business to tailor their discount(s)
- Consider creating currency only accepted at Village Center businesses





# #6

## Attract New Investment



# #6A Attract investment for the redevelopment of the DPW lot

Why?

- Potential to **increase property tax revenue**
- New **housing and commercial activity** likely to benefit existing Village Center businesses

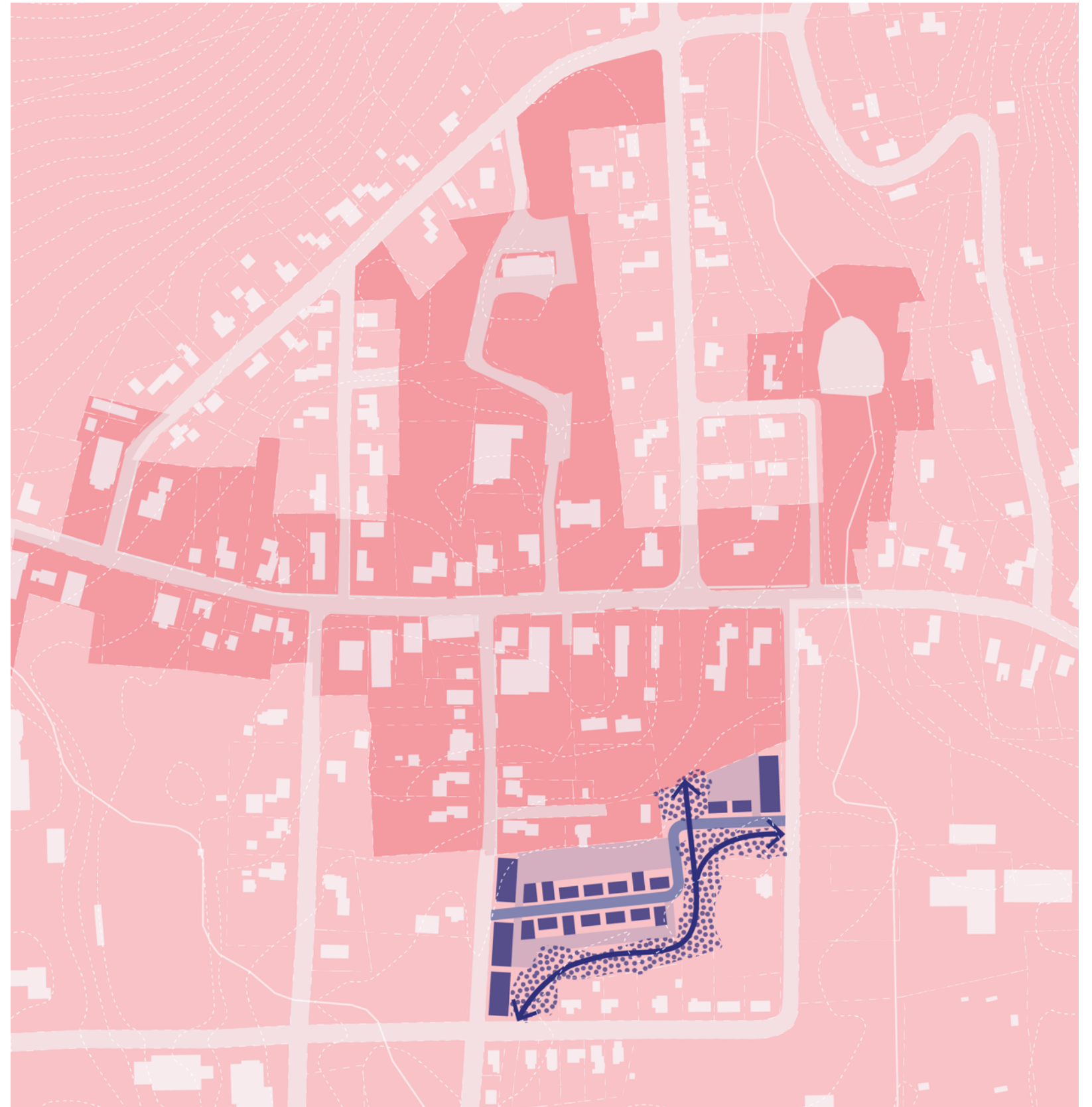




# #6A Attract investment for the redevelopment of the DPW lot

How?

- Enhance the Village Center identity and overall image of existing businesses and public spaces
- Identify commercial & housing market realities
- Prepare a package for potential investors





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→ **Questions & Answers**



**Are there any important issues  
that you feel are not addressed  
in this project list?**



**Are there components of project recommendations that you feel should be modified to make sure they are feasible?**



**Are there recommendations  
that you feel should be  
prioritized as the plan moves  
towards implementation?**



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## #6 Attract New Investment

- A. Attract investment for the redevelopment of the DPW lot





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Courtyard One  
Boston, MA 02118  
+1 617 426 4466

Email: [info@overunder.co](mailto:info@overunder.co)  
Images: [@overunder.co](https://www.instagram.com/overunder.co)  
Web: [www.overunder.co](http://www.overunder.co)